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Section 29

AUSTRALIA

Patents Act 1990

PATENT REQUEST: PETTY PATENT

I, being the person identified below as the Applicant,
request the grant of a patent to the person identified
below as the Nominated Person, for an invention described
in the accompanying Petty complete specification.

Full application details follow.

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[54] Invention Title JACKPOT SYSTEM

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ASSOCIATED PROVISIONAL APPLICATION DETAILS:

| | | | |
|------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|
| No: | Unknown | No: | PO3248 |
| Applicant: | COMS21 LIMITED | Applicant: | COMS21 LIMITED |
| Title: | JACKPOT SYSTEM | Title: | JACKPOT SYSTEM |
| Filed: | 23 May 1997 | Filed: | 25 October 1996 |

Drawing number recommended to accompany the abstract 1.

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AKaney

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AUSTRALIA

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NOTICE OF ENTITLEMENT

We, COMS21 LIMITED

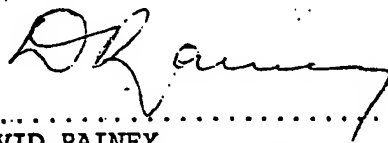
of 52 HOSKINS STREET
MITCHELL ACT 2911

being the applicant in respect of the attached application,
state the following:-

The person nominated for the grant of the patent has
entitlement from the actual inventor by assignment.

The person nominated for the grant of the patent is the
applicant of the provisional application listed on the
patent request form.

DATED this TWENTY-NINTH day of MAY 1997.



.....
DAVID RAINEY
Registered Patent Attorney
on behalf of the Applicant

0035712 300597



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(56) Prior Art Documents
AU 658111 78829/94 G07F 7/10 G07C 9/00
AU 589158 53370/86 G07F 17/34

(57) Claim

1. A method of controlling the operation of a plurality of interconnected poker machines in a controlling system in which a jackpot prize is awarded when a monetary accumulation related to the total monetary value played through said poker machines in a given period of time reaches a jackpot value, said method including:-

providing players of said poker machines with machine readable player identification means;

recording the identity of players when operating a poker machine;

and identifying as the jackpot winning player that player identified by the player identification means used to operate the poker machine which when thus operated causes said monetary accumulation to equal or exceed said jackpot value.

APPLICANT: COMS21 LIMITED
NUMBER:
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Form 10
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The Patents Act 1990

PETTY PATENT SPECIFICATION FOR AN INVENTION ENTITLED:

JACKPOT SYSTEM

The following statement is a full description of this invention,
including the best method of performing it known to me/us:

"JACKPOT SYSTEM"**Technical Field**

This invention relates to jackpot systems.

5 The invention has particular but not exclusive application to a jackpot system for, and method of, controlling the operation of a plurality of interconnected poker machines.

10 Background of Invention

So-called linked jackpot systems are known. Australian patent 589158 discloses a linked jackpot system in which a number of poker machines are linked together. As schematically illustrated in FIG 1, in this
15 known system a random number 11 is generated by the computer system to which the poker machines 10a, 10b ...10n are linked. Each of the poker machines produces an incrementing signal when operated by a player. These incrementing signals increment an accumulator 13 which
20 thus records an incrementing total of all playing operations on the system to which the machines are linked and is compared by a comparator 14 with the random number stored in store 12. When the incrementing total equals the random number the machine 10 which when operated
25 caused the incrementing total to equal or exceed the random number is identified by the system and a jackpot 15 equivalent to the random number is awarded to the player who claims to have operated the identified machine on the jackpot winning occasion.

30 Our earlier Australian application number PO 3248 describes one alternative to known jackpot systems.

Summary of Invention

35 The present invention aims to provide another alternative to known jackpot systems.

This invention in one aspect resides broadly in a method of controlling the operation of a plurality of interconnected poker machines in a controlling system in

which a jackpot prize is awarded when a monetary accumulation related to the total monetary value played through the poker machines in a given period of time reaches a jackpot value, the method including:-

5 providing players of the poker machines with machine readable player identification means;

recording the identity of players when operating a poker machine;

10 and identifying as the jackpot winning player that player identified by the player identification means used to operate the poker machine which when thus operated causes the monetary accumulation to equal or exceed the jackpot value.

15 As in the prior art, the randomly generated number may be stored as a fixed number, a monetary value relating to each operation of each machines in the system being accumulated in a counter and the accumulated counter compared with the fixed number.

However it is preferred that the method includes:-

20 storing a randomly generated number in jackpot data storage means, and

incrementing accumulator means to provide an accumulation of a jackpotting percentage of the monetary value played through the poker machines;

25 whereby the jackpot winning player is identified when the accumulation equals or exceeds the randomly generated number.

It is also preferred that the method includes:-

30 polling the poker machines after a preselected time interval;

incrementing the accumulator means by the total of the jackpotting percentages of the monetary value played through the poker machines which were operated during the preselected time interval, and

35 if the accumulation equals or exceeds the randomly generated number, generating a random sequence of the individual jackpotting percentages of the monetary value played through each of the poker machines which were

operated during the preselected time interval and in the random sequence sequentially adding each of the jackpotting percentages to the accumulation at the beginning of the preselected time interval.

5

Description of Drawings

In order that this invention may be more easily understood and put into practical effect, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings which illustrate

10 a preferred embodiment of the invention, wherein:-

FIG 1 is a schematic block diagram illustrating the prior art, and

FIG 2 is a schematic block diagram illustrating the invention.

15

Description of Preferred Embodiment of Invention

As seen schematically in FIG 2, a number of poker machines 30a, 30b 30n are played by players (not shown) each of whom have player identification means 31a, 31b 31n which uniquely and positively identify them. The identification means may be in the form of secure access identity means such as the smart cards disclosed in Australian Petty Patent 658111.

25 The identity of each player who operates a poker machine 30 is established by player identification means 31 and recorded in recording means 39 which records the identity of the player of each play of a machine.

Timing means 32 routinely generates a timing signal at brief intervals such as between three and ten seconds, whereupon polling means 33 polls poker machines 30a, 30b 30n and determines whether the machines have been operated in the preceding time interval.

35 The jackpotting percentage of the amount used to operate each machine which operated in the preceding time interval is added in adder 34 and the total accumulated in accumulator 37. The total in accumulator 37 is then compared in comparator 38 with a random number 35 which has been generated and stored in storage means 36.

The polling, totalling and accumulating procedure continues at the end of each time interval until comparator 38 determines that the total in accumulator 37 equals or exceeds the random number 35 in storage means

5 36.

When comparator 38 determines that the total in accumulator 37 equals or exceeds the random number 35 in storage means 36, the individual jackpotting percentages of the amounts used to operate each machine which was
 10 operated in the preceding time interval are randomly sequenced in random sequencing means 40, and in the randomly determined sequence each individual jackpotting percentage is sequentially added in accumulator 41 to the accumulated total at the beginning of the preceding time
 15 interval. The sequentially increasing accumulating total in accumulator 41 is sequentially compared in comparator 42 with the random number 35 in storage means 36.

A jackpot 43 is awarded to the player identified by the player identification means 39 as the player whose
 20 jackpotting percentage in the above sequential addition caused the accumulated total in accumulator 41 to equal or exceed the random number 35.

In use in accordance with the jackpot system of the present invention, a number of poker machines in a number
 25 of clubs are interconnected. The system generates a random number between settable upper and lower limits and stores this random number in memory. The upper and lower limits of the random number to be generated are stored in non-volatile memory. The random number represents a
 30 monetary value in dollars and whole cents.

When players operate a poker machine on the jackpot system, a jackpot percentage of their stake will accumulate in a jackpot accumulator. When the
 accumulated amount exceeds the randomly generated number,
 35 a jackpot equivalent to the randomly generated number is awarded.

In the jackpot system, the accumulated total is not incremented on each individual occasion a player operates

a poker machine connected to the system. Rather, every ten seconds (or lesser time interval depending on system programming) the machines in the system are polled and the total of the jackpot percentages of the machines operated during the preceding ten second interval is added to the total of the jackpot accumulator at the commencement of the ten second interval.

The new total may be either less, equal or greater than the random number.

10 If the new total is less than the random number, the jackpot accumulator is then incremented by the total of the jackpot percentages of the machines operated during the preceding ten second interval. The new updated total of the jackpot accumulation then becomes the figure to which the total of the jackpot percentages of the machines operated during the next ten second interval will be added at the end of that ten second interval.

If the new total is equal to or greater than the random number, a process begins to determine the winner of the jackpot. The winner of the jackpot is not necessarily the player whose machine in real time sequence would have incremented the jackpot total to equal or exceed the random number. Indeed, the jackpot accumulator is not incremented in timed sequence by signals from individual machines but rather, as described above, by aggregated increments at ten second intervals.

The winner of the jackpot is determined by sequentially adding to the total of the jackpot accumulation at the beginning of the ten second period, those individual player percentages of individual plays of individual machines which in total during the ten second interval caused the jackpot accumulation to equal or exceed the random number. However these individual player jackpotting percentages are not added in the real time sequence in which they were actually generated, but rather in a sequence which is itself randomly generated - this random sequence being varied every ten minutes.

The winner of the jackpot is the player identified

by the smart-card which has necessarily been used to play in the jackpot system, as being the player whose individual jackpotting percentage, when added to the progressive total of the jackpot accumulator in the order of this randomly generated sequence, causes the progressive total to equal or exceed the random number.

During the currency of each jackpot, display means in each room/club display the progressive total of the jackpot accumulator. The jackpot system stores the identity of the machine being played by the player identified by the smart-card as the jackpot winner. When the jackpot is won, the display means displays the amount of the jackpot which has been won, the identity of club with the machine used by the winning player and the winning player's club badge number. The display means does not display the identity of the machine used by the winning player.

It will be appreciated that while the system outlined above is itself an inventive alternative to prior art systems, the present invention of identifying the player rather than the machine can be implemented in the jackpot system of the prior art.

The system and method of the present invention has a number of advantages over known poker machine jackpot systems and methods.

By identifying the jackpot winning person rather than the jackpot winning machine, the present invention positively and uniquely identifies the player associated with the jackpot rather than the machine associated with the jackpot thereby avoiding disputes which occur in present systems as to which player was actually operating the jackpot winning machine.

Because there is a predetermined finite polling time of only a few seconds, or less depending on the power of the controlling system, there is virtually no delay in announcing and displaying the details of the winner of the jackpot. (This is usually done by club or badge number for reasons of confidentiality.) This contrasts

with known systems which do not poll the machines and in which the updating occurs for every operation of the machine on the system and can generate delays of perhaps 3 or 4 minutes before the jackpot is actually notified as having been won. During this time, the actual player of the machine which triggered the jackpot may have disappeared. This coupled with the known system of nominating the jackpot machine rather than the player can lead to confusion, disruption and in some instances, altercations and legal action.

It will of course be realised that whilst the above has been given by way of an illustrative example of this invention, all such and other modifications and variations hereto, as would be apparent to persons skilled in the art, are deemed to fall within the broad scope and ambit of this invention as is herein set forth.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

1. A method of controlling the operation of a plurality of interconnected poker machines in a controlling system in which a jackpot prize is awarded when a monetary accumulation related to the total monetary value played through said poker machines in a given period of time reaches a jackpot value, said method including:-

 - providing players of said poker machines with machine readable player identification means;
 - recording the identity of players when operating a poker machine;
 - and identifying as the jackpot winning player that player identified by the player identification means used to operate the poker machine which when thus operated causes said monetary accumulation to equal or exceed said jackpot value.
2. A method as claimed in claim 1, and including:-

 - storing a randomly generated number in jackpot data storage means, and
 - incrementing accumulator means to provide an accumulation of a jackpotting percentage of the monetary value played through said poker machines;
 - whereby said jackpot winning player is identified when said accumulation equals or exceeds said randomly generated number.
3. A method as claimed in claim 2, and including:-

 - polling said poker machines after a preselected time interval;
 - incrementing said accumulator means by the total of the jackpotting percentages of the monetary value played through the poker machines which were operated during said preselected time interval, and
 - if said accumulation equals or exceeds said randomly generated number, generating a random sequence of the individual jackpotting percentages of the monetary value

played through each of the poker machines which were
operated during said preselected time interval and in
said random sequence sequentially adding each said
jackpotting percentage to the accumulation at the
5 beginning of the preselected time interval.

DATED this TWENTY-NINTH of MAY 1997.

CCMS21 LIMITED

by

10 PIZZEYS PATENT AND TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS

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24645/97

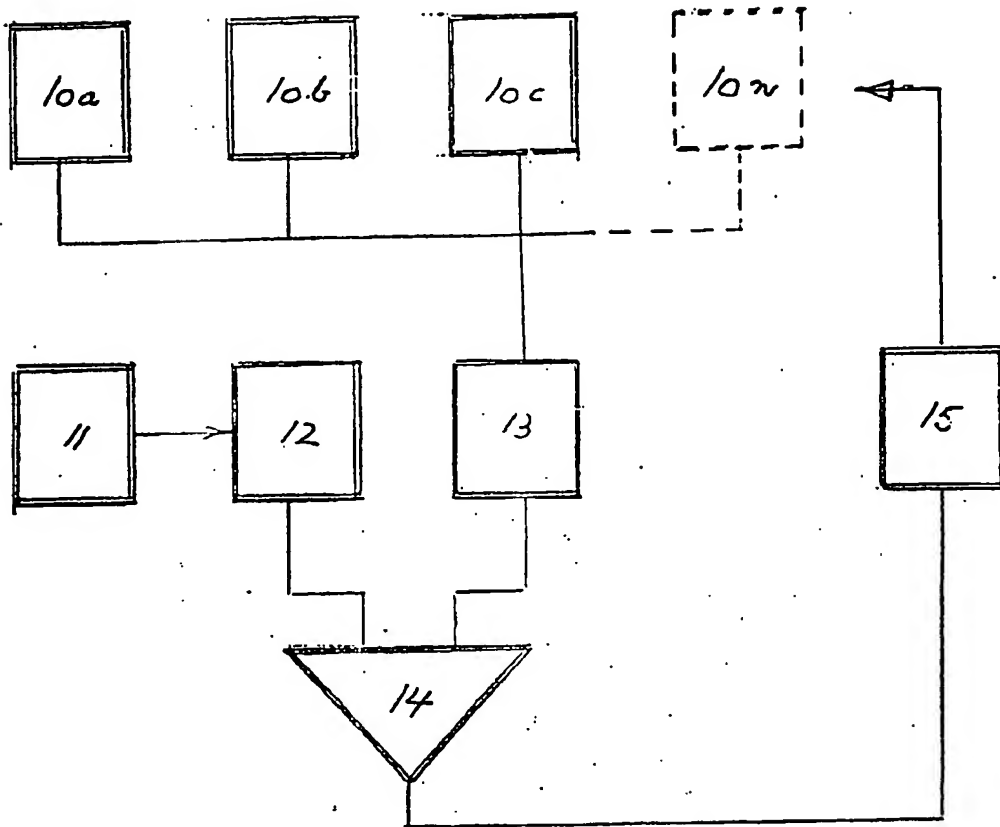


FIG 1

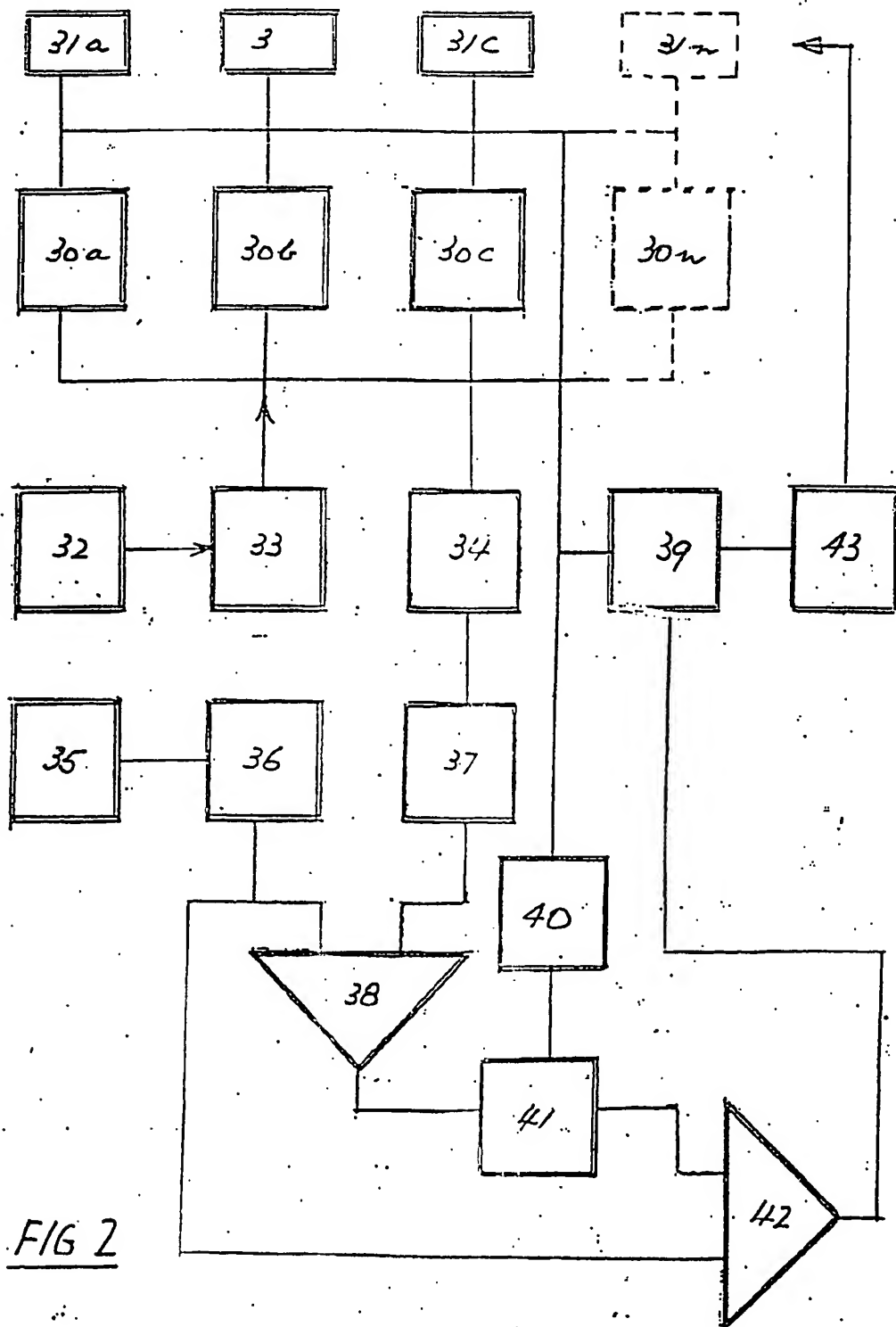


FIG 2